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Upcoming Event:

February 2007 is Child Passenger Safety Month



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## Governor Fletcher, Transportation Officials Celebrate Record \$1 Billion Investment

For the first time ever, the Commonwealth has invested \$1 billion in transportation projects during a one-year period. Governor Ernie Fletcher recently joined Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) officials and employees to celebrate this historic \$1 billion milestone, which is making our roads safer and creating new economic opportunities.

“This historic milestone underscores my unwavering commitment to improving safety and mobility on our highways,” said Governor Fletcher. “Investing in projects to improve safety and mobility decreases congestion and reduces pollution. Improving Kentucky’s transportation infrastructure is essential as we build strong communities.”

“Governor Fletcher’s bold leadership is fostering historic progress for Kentucky’s highway infrastructure,” said Transportation Cabinet Secretary Bill Nighbert. “We are grateful for the dedication and commitment of our KYTC family, whose hard work is a huge part of this celebration. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our many wonderful employees.”

The Transportation Cabinet surpassed the previous award record in November, when the total award for 2006 reached \$792 million. The December letting continued the record-breaking trend. During the \$1 billion celebration, Governor Fletcher signed paperwork awarding a \$24.4 million project in Madison County, bringing this year’s total award amount to more than \$1 billion.

“We are pleased to have reached the \$1 billion mark in state highway projects, which represents a great move forward for transportation in Kentucky,” said Rep. Harry Moberly (D-Richmond). “A modern transportation system is vital to create opportunities for future generations of Kentuckians.”

Greater efficiency and better management of taxpayer dollars are allowing the Transportation Cabinet to significantly increase investment to the road fund, paving the way for needed highway improvement projects across the Commonwealth. A recent report, published by the Reason Foundation, ranked Kentucky’s highway system the seventh most efficient in the country. The annual report examined cost versus effectiveness of highway systems in all 50 states to determine the rankings.



### VISION

Through public and private partnerships, achieve the most improved and sustainable downward trend in highway fatalities and injuries in the nation.

### MISSION

To be the vital link in the Commonwealth’s chain of transportation safety by elevating the emphasis on highway and traffic safety.

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KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

# SAFETY CONNECTION

WINTER ISSUE

JANUARY 2007

## Governor Fletcher Removes Tolls on Audubon and Natcher Parkways

On November 21, 2006, the end of an era occurred. With backhoe in motion, Governor Fletcher demolished the toll booth in lane 5 at the Bowling Green Toll Plaza, signifying the freeing of the William H. Natcher Parkway. The event drew thunderous applause from the crowd.

“These are the last parkway system toll roads in Kentucky,” said Governor Fletcher. “For far too long people have said this area is the only place in Kentucky that you have to pay to get in and pay to get out. By removing the tolls, we are clearing a path for new jobs and economic opportunities throughout the entire region.”

The 23-mile Audubon Parkway opened in 1970 while the 70-mile William Natcher Parkway opened in 1972. There were four toll plazas along the two parkways. The tolls were scheduled to be removed by the end of the current fiscal year on June 30, 2007. Governor Fletcher made the decision to remove the tolls early.



Governor Fletcher removes toll booth.

During the ceremony preceding the demolition, Secretary Bill Nighbert said of the freeing, “It opens up economic development and makes it more attractive for the people down through here”. Governor Fletcher agreed, “I think that will be good for the area. It’s certainly pleasing for a whole lot of people; they’ve had to stop, be inconvenienced and take some money out of their pocket just to be traveling home.” (Continued on Page 2)

## Median Cable Barriers Help Reduce Highway Fatalities

Since installation this summer, median cable barriers have prevented at least 20 potential cross-over crashes on Jefferson County interstates. In each of these incidents, the cable barriers kept vehicles from crossing the median into opposing traffic. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet awarded a \$3.3 million contract earlier this year for the installation of median cable barriers along 14 miles of interstate roadway.

“Governor Fletcher championed the use of these median cable barriers,” said Transportation Secretary Bill Nighbert. “The primary seatbelt, quick clearance and graduated driver’s license laws, combined with engineering improvements like the cable barriers, are helping fulfill the Governor’s directive to reduce highway fatalities across the state. Currently, highway deaths are at a five year low in Kentucky.”

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## Buckle Up & Drive Smart Kentucky!



Commissioner  
Tim Hazlette

“For far too long people have said this area is the only place in Kentucky that you have to pay to get in and pay to get out. By removing the tolls, we are clearing a path for new jobs and economic opportunities throughout the entire region.”

—Governor Ernie Fletcher



Director Mark Stapleton

2006 marked the passage of significant safety legislation to protect Kentucky families. After experiencing the most fatalities since 1973 in 2005, Governor Fletcher signed the primary seatbelt legislation into law.

Seatbelts save lives. Recent research from the University of Kentucky’s Transportation Center and from the Kentucky Institute of Medicine revealed some startling projections concerning the impact a primary seat belt law will have on Kentucky families and the state’s economy. Some highlights include:

- At least 62 fewer fatalities per year
- 388 fewer incapacitating spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries

-1,051 fewer non-incapacitating injuries from accidents involving passenger vehicles and light trucks

-Kentucky’s Medicaid budget would save a minimum of \$40.9 million over 10 years, including \$2.2 million the first year and \$585,000 per year for long-term medical care

-Kentucky would save \$324 million in comprehensive costs (lost life years and productivity)

Beginning January 1, 2007, unbuckled motorists may be pulled over and a violation of the law will result in a \$25 fine. Highway safety is a shared responsibility. Please take a few moments to buckle up and remind your loved ones to do the same.

(Continued from first page)

## Governor Fletcher Removes Tolls

Along with Governor Fletcher and Secretary Nighbert, House Speaker Jody Richards, Representative Tommy Thompson and Senator Brett Guthrie spoke concerning the removal of the tolls.

After the ceremony at the Bowling Green Toll Plaza, Governor Fletcher, Secretary Nighbert and several other state and local officials traveled to the Hebbardsville Toll Plaza on the Audubon Parkway and repeated the demolition process. The ceremonies ended a 50 year era of tolls in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In August 1956, the Kentucky Turnpike was opened,

which lead to the construction of eight additional parkways and one toll bridge. Toll roads accounted for 676.79 miles with a construction cost of \$900 million. Toll roads were developed to give interstate access to economically undeveloped areas.



## Welcome Director Stapleton

Mark Stapleton was recently named the Director of the Division of Traffic Assistance and Security. A retired twenty-year veteran of the Kentucky State Police, Stapleton brings a wealth of knowledge to his new position. A former detective with KSP Drug Enforcement/Special Investigation, and Assistant Detail Commander with the Governor’s Executive Security, he will lead the newly formed

Division of Traffic Assistance and Security.

The Division oversees the Transportation Operations Center, 511 critical highway and weather information system, and the Safe Patrol Service proving roadside assistance to motorists.

A Johnson County native, Stapleton now lives in Lexington. He has one son Taylor (Age 13) who attends the Lexington Christian Academy.

## Median Cable Barriers (Continued from first page)



The system on Interstate 64 was installed between the Cochran Hill Tunnels and ½ mile east of Breckenridge Lane. Construction was completed in late July

Cable barriers reduce injuries.

The cable barriers on Interstate 71 stretch from downtown Louisville to the Jefferson/Oldham County line. Vehicles struck the system twice while this area was under construction. Since the work was completed in mid-September, this section has been hit 14 times including one

and since that time the system has been impacted four times by vehicles.

incident involving a semi-truck.

MAC Construction and Excavating Inc. performed the construction work which began in June and was completed in mid-September. As part of the contract, whenever the cable barriers are impacted the contractor must make repairs to the system within 96 hours.

Construction will begin next year on the installation of cable barriers in the median of the Gene Snyder Freeway (I-265) between I-65 and I-71.

“The most common causes of crashes

during the snow and ice season are the result of a failure to

maintain control, excessive speed, and following other

vehicles too closely,” says Transportation

Safety Commissioner Tim Hazlette.

## For the Latest Road Condition Reports—511

Road condition reports are available by calling 511 or logging on to the 511 travel and traffic information website at <http://511.ky.gov>. Road conditions descriptions are:

**Wet Pavement**— The road is wet and ice could form as temperatures drop.

**Partly Covered**— The road is partly covered with snow, slush, or ice. Markings may be obscured.

**Mostly Covered**— The road is mostly covered with snow, slush, or ice. Roadway markers may be difficult to see because of packed snow and rutting conditions.

**Completely Covered**— The roadway is completely covered with snow, slush, or ice. Markings are obscured.

**Impassable**— Roadway conditions are not suitable for travel unless required by an emergency.

“The most common causes of crashes during the snow and ice season are the result of a failure to maintain control, excessive speed, and following other vehicles too closely,” says Transportation Safety Commissioner Tim Hazlette. “These are preventable crashes and we urge you to buckle, drive defensively and be alert as you venture out in less than ideal conditions.”



Ryder Cup and FEI World Equestrian Games Signs are going up. The signs will be installed at various locations on I-65, I-75, and I-64.



Drive Smart Team participates in Simpson Co. Christmas Parade.



**Myth: I don't need to wear a seat belt – my vehicle has air bags.**

**Fact:** Air bags are designed to work in combination with seat belts, providing supplemental protection during certain types of crashes.

**Did You Know?** Air bags inflate at a speed of over 100 miles per hour. An unrestrained or improperly restrained occupant can be seriously injured or killed by the force of an activated air bag.

**Myth: I might be saved if I'm thrown clear of the crash.**

**Fact:** Being thrown to safety in a crash is almost impossible. Your best bet is to be securely held in by your seat belt.

**Did You Know?** You are 25 times more likely to be killed in a crash when thrown from a vehicle. You may be thrown through the windshield and into another vehicle or fixed object, scraped along the pavement or even crushed by your own vehicle.

*The Kentucky Department of Transportation Safety, within the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, has been charged by Governor Fletcher to lead the Commonwealth's coordination, communication and cooperation efforts among public and private safety partners to reduce preventable tragedies on Kentucky's roadways.*

*The Department is responsible for reviewing highway safety data, identifying major causes for fatalities and injuries, and developing the necessary safety measures to educate and protect citizens. In addition, the Department provides critical highway condition and weather information on a 24-hour, 7-day basis.*

*For more information about the Department of Transportation Safety and its safety partners, please visit <http://highwaysafety.ky.gov>. The Department encourages you to Buckle Up Kentucky and Drive Smart!*

 <b>KENTUCKY LIFESAVERS CONFERENCE</b> APRIL 23-25, 2007 GALT HOUSE HOTEL & SUITES LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY					
The Kentucky Lifesavers Conference will provide a forum that delivers common-sense solutions to reduce the number of highway fatalities and injuries in Kentucky.					
MARK YOUR CALENDAR					
<a href="http://lifesavers.ky.gov">http://lifesavers.ky.gov</a> If you would like to be added to the mail list, please contact us at 1-800-432-0719					
<b>SPONSORING PARTNERS:</b> Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Transportation Safety Federal Highway Administration Governor's Highway Safety Program		 Kentucky Transportation Center University of Kentucky Transportation Center		<b>CONTACT INFORMATION:</b> University of Kentucky Transportation Center Phone: (859) 257-4531 or 1-800-432-0719 Fax: (859) 257-1061 Email: <a href="mailto:mhorseman@engr.uky.edu">mhorseman@engr.uky.edu</a> Web: <a href="http://lifesavers.ky.gov">http://lifesavers.ky.gov</a>	
<b>IN COOPERATION WITH:</b> Governor's Executive Committee on Highway Safety					

***Kentucky has a “primary” seat belt law. This means drivers can be stopped and cited if anyone in the vehicle is not wearing a seatbelt.***

## KENTUCKY'S LAW

### Seat Belts [KRS 189.125(6)]

A person shall not operate a motor vehicle manufactured after 1981 on the public roadways of this state unless the driver and all passengers are wearing a properly adjusted and fastened seat belt.

**Fine for violation:** Beginning January 1, 2007, any person who violates the provisions of Kentucky's seat belt law shall be fined an amount not to exceed \$25.00. Through December 31, 2006, a courtesy warning period will be in effect for violations.

## MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT SEAT BELTS:

**Myth: I don't need a seat belt when driving at slow speeds or on short trips.**

**Fact:** Most crash deaths occur within 25 miles of home and at speeds of less than 40 miles per hour.

**Did You Know?** Fatal injuries in unbelted occupants have occurred in vehicles traveling as slow as 12 miles per hour. An unbelted person hitting a windshield in a 40 mile-per-hour crash would feel the same force as hitting the ground after falling off a five-story building.

**Myth: If I wear a seat belt, I might get trapped in my car if it catches on fire or if it becomes submerged under water.**

**Fact:** Crashes involving fire or water happen in only ½ of one percent of all crashes. The greatest danger to vehicle occupants is from the impact of the crash itself.

**Did You Know?** Seat belt wearers are more likely to be uninjured and conscious after a crash, allowing them to get out of a vehicle quickly.

**Myth: If I don't wear a seat belt I'm not affecting anyone but myself. If I'm injured or die in a crash from not wearing a seat belt, that's my business!**

**Fact:** Deaths and injuries that result from non-use of seat belts cost everyone in the form of higher insurance premiums, medical costs, property damage and loss of productivity. Plus, the emotional cost to victims' families is too great to measure.

**Did You Know?** Kentuckians alone pay over \$3 billion each year for car crash victims. Citizens not involved in crashes pay three-fourths of that cost.